

To the Editor:

Your recent editorial assertion that Texas never produced a clean air plan for Dallas/Fort Worth that reduced pollution to legal levels is misleading.

The most recent clean air plan submitted to us is in fact an innovative plan, designed to meet required air quality standards. Indeed, EPA proposed to approve that plan. However, a far-reaching federal court ruling eliminated our ability to consider the impact of air pollution drifting into North Texas from other areas of the country.

As a result of that court decision, EPA is now evaluating a proposal to reclassify the local area from its current “serious” status to the “severe” category. This will require a new clean air plan, which State and local officials are already in the process of developing.

The editorial also implies that the efforts of federal, State, and local partnership to address Dallas/Fort Worth air to date have been a failure. The record shows otherwise.

Most all of the air pollution controls described in the State’s pending clean air plan are already being implemented and these controls are having a positive impact on our air. The number of days when air quality standards has been violated has dropped from 15 days in 1994, to 7 days in 2002, to 3 days this year. That progress has been achieved in the face of rapid population growth and even greater increases in miles traveled on the roadways of our region.

Our mission is to ensure healthy air for the people of North Texas and throughout the country. In partnership with State and local officials, we are working hard to achieve that result and we won’t rest until we do.

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